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At length the cardinal, a great patron of the arts, began to be exceedingly anxious relative to the lad. He caused inquiries to be made, and found that the monks of an isolated convent had sheltered the young artist of fourteen, who had humbly asked permission of them to copy a picture by Raphael which was in the chapel of the cloister. He had been freely allowed to carry out his wish. He was then brought back to the cardinal, who received him with kindness, and placed him at school with one of the best painters of Rome.

Fifty years later, there were two old men who lived like brethren in one of the most beautiful villas of Florence. People said of the one, "He is one of the greatest painters of the day," and of the other, "He is a model of friendship." It was Pietro de Cortona and his friend, the scullion—the one a great painter, the other a rich and honoured citizen.

### THE UNKNOWN MASTERPIECE.

THERE is a tradition current in Spain, which is not one of the least singular of the tales which float about in connexion with painters. One day Rubens was in the neighbourhood of Madrid, and went into a convent of very severe rules, and remarked, not without some surprise, in an humble and poor choir of the monastery, a picture of the most sublime and admirable talent. This picture represented the death of a monk. Rubens summoned his scholars, showed them the picture, and asked their opinion. All replied, that it was of exceeding genius.

"Who can be the author of this work?" asked Vandyk, the cherished pupil of Rubens.

"There is a name at the bottom of the picture, but it has been carefully rubbed out," replied Van Thulden.

Rubens begged the favour of an interview with the prior, and asked of the old monk the name of the artist, whose production he admired so much.

"The painter is no longer of this world," replied the abbot.

"Dead!" cried Rubens, "dead! And no one knows his name, no one ever hinted to me, no one told me, of his name, which should be immortal,—a name before which my own would have faded. And yet, my father," said the artist with a flush of pride, "I am Paul Rubens."

At the sound of this name, the pale face of the prior was animated by singular warmth. His eyes flashed and he looked at Rubens with a strange and wild look—a faint glimmer of pride flashed across his face—but it lasted only a moment. The monk then looked down, crossed his arms, which for a moment he had raised to the heavens in an instant of enthusiasm.

"The artist is not of this world," he repeated.

"His name, my father—his name, that I may let the whole world know it, that I may render unto him the glory which is due unto him."

The monk shook in every limb; a cold sweat burst out upon his body and tinged his wan cheeks; his lips were compressed convulsively, like priests ready to reveal a mystery of which you know the secret.

"His name, his name," cried Rubens.

The monk shook his head.

"Listen to me, my brother; you have not understood my meaning. I said to you that the artist was not of this world: I did not say he was dead."

"You say he lives," cried the artists in chorus. "Give forth his name."

"He has renounced the world—he is in a cloister, he is a monk."

"A monk, my father, a monk? Oh, tell me in what convent. He must come out of it. When God stamps a man with the seal of genius, this man should not be buried in obscurity. God gives such a man a sublime mission, and he must accomplish his destiny. Tell me in what cloister he is concealed, and I will tear him from it, telling him of the glory that awaits him. If he refuses, I will have him commanded

by the Pope to return to the world and resume his brushes. The Pope loves me, my father, and the Pope will hearken to my words."

"I will give up neither his name nor the cloister which has opened its shelter to him," replied the monk in a firm tone.

"The Pope will command you," said Rubens, exasperated.

"Listen to me," replied the monk, "listen to me, in the name of God. Do you think that this man, before leaving the world, before renouncing fortune and glory, did not first struggle firmly against such a resolution? Think you, brother, that he must not have felt bitter deceptions, bitter sorrow, before he became convinced that all was deception and vanity? Let him then die in peace in that shelter he has found against the world and its sorrow. Your efforts, moreover, will be in vain—he will triumphantly reject your advances," he added, making the sign of the cross, "for God will continue to be his friend, God, who in his mercy has deigned to appear to him, and will not drive him from his presence."

"But, father, he renounces immortality."

"Immortality is nothing in presence of eternity."

And the monk refused to carry on the conversation.

Rubens went away with his pupils, silent and sad, and returned to Madrid.

The prior went back to his cell, and kneeling down on the straw mat which served him as a bed, prayed fervently to God.

Then he collected together his pencils, his colours, and his easel, which were scattered about his cell, and cast them through the window into the river which flowed beneath. He gazed then a little while sadly at these objects as they floated away.

When they had entirely disappeared, he knelt down again, and prayed with excessive fervour.

The author of the masterpiece was never known.

### GERARD DOUW.

GERARD DOUW, the most feeling and expressive of Dutch *genre* painters, Durer excepted, was born at Leyden on the 7th of April, 1613. His father, Janszoon Douw, was a glazier. Gerard, however, showed no inclination to follow that trade, but early manifested a taste for the fine arts. The father did not oppose his son's inclinations, but, on the contrary, did all in his power to encourage and strengthen them. When a mere child, Gerard Douw was placed with Bartholomew Dolendo, an engraver, with whom he remained for some few months, acquiring considerable skill in the art. He was then placed with Peter Rouwhorn, painter on glass, with whom he remained about two years more. At the expiration of that period, such was the progress the young artist had made, that his master had little else to teach him, and accordingly, at fifteen years of age, Gerard Douw became the pupil of the celebrated Rembrandt. After three years of unremitting study under that master, Douw felt that he might release himself from the trammels of an instructor, and dispense with all lessons, except those taught by nature herself. Accordingly, he left the studio of Rembrandt, and prepared to take his own independent position in the world of art.

Portrait painting was the first style which engaged his attention; but of this he soon tired. He found that it exacted too much of his versatile powers. Not only did it necessitate the trouble of taking accurate likenesses, but also of painting good pictures. He required more time, too, to perfect his works than many people who wished to engage his talents were disposed to give. Their patience was fairly exhausted before he had completed more than a mere sketch of their features. Such was the elaborate patience which he bestowed upon the effort to render every detail of his picture in the most perfect manner, that Descamps assures us, on one occasion, when Douw was engaged in painting the por-

trait of a lady, he spent five days upon the hand. Another authority says, that to a broomstick, in one of his pictures, he devoted three, some say five, days of incessant application. It is not surprising, therefore, that he should have abandoned a department of his art which demanded such a vast outlay of time, and which, moreover, did not allow his imagination sufficient scope to develop itself. He obeyed the instincts of his genius, therefore, in surrendering himself to the spirit of his fancy, whether that led him amid the beauties of nature, or among the homely scenes of domestic life. Whatever picture he undertook received the utmost attention, even in its minutest particulars, at his hands. The care he bestowed merely upon his colours almost exceeds belief. He always ground them himself. He kept them shut up in air-tight boxes, and closed every aperture of the room in which they were placed, so that the apartment itself was almost air-tight; he also entered the room on tip-toe, with the scrupulous caution with which a sick chamber is visited; sat himself down softly, to prevent his clothes from sweeping against the floor or the furniture, and thus causing dust to arise in the room. He also kept his brushes, palettes, and pencils, in positions where they were secure from atmospheric variation and influence. This care was not bestowed in vain. His colouring presents a richness and purity which has rarely been equalled, and probably never surpassed. The neglect of these minutiae affects much the slow progress of modern art. When studying the style of Rembrandt, he appears to have viewed the works of that master through a convex lens; for when Rembrandt's pictures are seen through that medium, they bear a marked resemblance to those of Douw.

Gerard Douw had a most intimate knowledge of the mechanical details of his art; an artistic capacity to group those details in a spirit of harmony; and unflagging manual and mental industry. His industry was indeed marvellous. He would bestow hours in studying new effects, in viewing the contrasts and combinations of light and shade, and in perfecting the most trivial accessories of his subject. He cared not how he laboured or how protracted his labour was, so that he was enabled to attain to that degree of excellence to which he felt his genius was capable of leading him. He was guided, as is every truly great mind, solely by the light of his own opinions. If he pleased himself, he had achieved the highest possible amount of success. He was his own critic; all other critics might be listened to, but it was himself alone who was to be obeyed. It was no easy task he set himself, but it was one that at any expenditure of time and patience he determined to execute. How he succeeded is well known. Other painters may have been as painstaking, but in no works of art are the evidences of industry more unobtrusively apparent than in the works of Gerard Douw.

An eminent critic thus sums up the character of Douw: "Formed in the school of Rembrandt, Douw appears to have received from him a thorough knowledge of light and shade and the power of treating it, so as to produce complete harmony; but he abandoned the fantastic tendency and the striking effects of his master, and formed for himself a peculiar style. Gerard Douw delights most in subjects within the narrow circle of kindly family feeling; we meet with no action, as in Terburg, in which an interest is excited by the traces of some passion hidden beneath the surface, but merely the affectionate relations of simple domestic life, and the peaceful intercourse of a quiet home. The execution, as is necessary in such subjects, is extremely neat and highly finished, without degenerating into pettiness or constraint: the various accessories are handled with the same care as the figures, for they perform a necessary part in domestic life; and the daily intercourse with them seems, as it were, to lend them an independent existence and a peculiar interest. The arrangement is, therefore, such, that these accessories not only combine agreeably with the whole, but in general occupy a considerable portion of the picture. We often look through a window, on the sill of which lie all kinds of household utensils, into the busy scene within. Frequently the comfort

of domestic privacy is made more striking by the twilight of evening or by candlelight; for in the treatment also of the effects of light of this kind Gerard Douw has shown himself a great master. Although the life of the lower classes, such as housemaids and retailers of articles in daily use, frequently forms the subject of his pictures, yet they are painted without any leaning to the burlesque and vulgar feeling of such masters as Brauer; indeed, whenever Gerard Douw approaches to coarseness of this kind, we can observe that it is done with design and with an effort. On the contrary, neither the drawing-room of the great, nor subjects supplied by poetry, are suited to his natural taste; and though he has frequently tried them, the result is not happy."

Gerard Douw lived in honour and prosperity, and died at the age of sixty-one, in the year 1674. He had several imitators, the most successful of whom was Francis Miéris, born 1635, died 1681. His imitations frequently deceived experienced judges. Peter Van Slingeland was another imitator of Douw, and many of his pictures bear a marked resemblance to those of that master, and are frequently sold as such. But there is a certain weakness and irresolution in Van Slingeland's pictures, which the practised eye is enabled to detect at once. John Van Staveran was another imitator and pupil of Douw. His subjects were, however, limited, and his style far from effective. The principal works of Gerard Douw are "The Dropsical Woman," in the Louvre; "A Schoolroom, by Candlelight," in the Musée at Amsterdam, and valued at £1,600; the "Interior of a Room, with groined ceiling and arched windows," in a private collection in Paris, and valued at 1,200 guineas; "A Grocer's Shop," in the possession of Queen Victoria, and valued at 1,200 guineas; "The Poulterer's Shop," worth 1,270 guineas, formerly in the possession of Sir Robert Peel; "La Marchande Epicrière du Village," in the Louvre, value £2,200; "A Schoolroom by Candlelight," now in the Musée at Amsterdam; "The Interior of a Dentist's Shop." Many valuable portraits of himself, in various collections. "La Lecture de la Sainte Bible," in the Louvre, valued at £1,000; "A Hermit at his Devotions," in the possession of Lord Ashburton, and valued at £1,500; "The Water Doctor," now in the palace of the Hermitage, St. Petersburg; "The Surprise," in the Gallery at Dresden, and valued at 500 guineas, &c. &c. Some of his pictures, of great value, were sold to the Empress of Russia, and were lost at sea in 1771. Of the pictures to which we have alluded, we select a few for description.

The first is "The Dropsical Woman." The picture represents the interior of a large and lofty room, with an arched window on the right, and a circular one above it; in the opposite side of the apartment is suspended a rich piece of tapestry, which is drawn up, and forms a pleasing object, both from the tasteful cast of the folds, and the angle which it makes in the picture. The composition exhibits a group of four figures, disposed near the window. The centre one is a lady of middle age, evidently suffering under a severe malady; her affliction is affectionately deplored by her daughter, a beautiful girl, who is kneeling by the side of her parent, holding one of her hands. A doctor, in a purple silk robe, and a scarf round his waist, stands on the left of the lady, attentively examining the symptoms of the disease; while a female attendant, who is behind her chair, is offering her some refreshment in a spoon. The elegance of the dresses, and the taste displayed in the furniture, denote the rank and opulence of the family. This surprising production is no less excellent for its finish in all the details than for the strong natural expression of each figure: the patient resignation of the lady, the filial affection of the daughter, the anxious attention of the nurse, and the ominous gesture of the doctor, are portrayed with a refinement of feeling that would do honour to the best Italian masters. This picture is in the Louvre, and is valued at £4,800. It is his masterpiece. It was given by the Elector Palatine to Prince Eugene, and, after his death, remained in the gallery at Turin, until the French carried it off and placed it in the Louvre. They gave £4,000 instead of restoring it.

The next is "The Interior of a Dentist's Shop," of which we present an engraving. An old man is being submitted to the operations of the dentist. At the back, an old woman, resting upon a basket, is waiting to see the tooth extracted. On the window-sill in front are a shell, a bottle, a basin, and a pot of flowers. A skull on a shelf at the back of the room, several medicine jars, and a stuffed lizard suspended from the

and the general air of life and reality which invests it, speaking in no small voice of the genius of the creator.

In the collection at Hampton Court there is a small Gerard Douw of "An Old Woman asleep with a Book on her knees." The Dulwich Gallery also contains two small pictures, and in the gallery of the late Sir Robert Peel was a picture which formerly belonged to Mr. Beckford, and was sold at the Fon -



THE DENTIST. FROM A PAINTING BY GERARD DOUW.

roof, give completeness to the scene. The scrutinising look of the operator contrasts well with the resigned appearance of the patient; and the steady reflective gaze of the old woman is shown to great advantage in the light of the window. This picture, one of several illustrations of dentistry, a subject Douw often treated, is remarkable for the richness of the colouring, the truthfulness of detail, the admirable grouping,

hill Abbey sale for 1,270 guineas. It represents "A Hare bargained for between an old woman and young girl."

In the Berlin Museum there is a picture representing "A Storeroom with vast quantities of Provisions." The cook has just opened the door and has a candle in her hand. She steps lightly to avoid disturbing a mouse about to enter a trap. The light on her face produces a pleasing effect.